

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 /065 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2498

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1072

FOR LEURS AND TODMAN

ATTN: DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN NICARAGUA

REF: (A) MANAGUA 0377, (B) MANAGUA 0836, (C) MANAGUA 1032

1. EMBASSY HOPES THAT FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION WILL BE OF USE TO DEPARTMENT, POSSIBLY FOR CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY AND PRESS BRIEFINGS:

(A) EMBASSY HAS MONITORED HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN NICARAGUA CLOSELY DURING PAST YEAR, AND HAS CONTINUED TO DO SO UNDER CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

(B) DURING FIRST SIX WEEKS OF NEW ADMINISTRATION, EMBASSY HAS EXPLAINED TO HIGHEST LEVELS OF GON THE DEEP INTEREST OF PRESIDENT CARTER, SHARED BY THE ENTIRE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND AMERICAN PEOPLE, IN PROTECTING AND ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WORLD.

(C) AMBASSADOR HAS MET WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA THREE TIMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION SINCE JANUARY 20:

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(1) ON JANUARY 24, AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND INFORMED THAT US RELATIONS WITH GON WILL BE SHAPED, IN PART, ON HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE (REFTEL A).

(2) ON FEBRUARY 18, AMBASSADOR TOLD SOMOZA OF U.S. GOVERNMENT'S DEEP CONCERN OVER ALLEGATIONS OF CONTINUING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

(INCLUDING TERRORIZING RURAL POPULATION, SUMMARY EXECUTIONS AND TORTURE BY NATIONAL GUARD) MADE PUBLIC BY NICARAGUAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS IN JANUARY, 1977 PASTORAL LETTER (REFTEL B). (3) ON MARCH 2, AMBASSADOR AGAIN SPOKE TO PRESIDENT TO EXPRESS DEEPENING CONCERN OF ADMINISTRATION OVER NEW ALLEGATION OF AMERICAN CAPUCHIN PRIESTS OF MASSACRE OF TOTAL OF 86 CAMPESINO MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN JANUARY 1977 BY NATIONAL GUARD IN NORTH (REFTEL C).

(D) EMBASSY HAS ASKED GON TO UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED MASSACRES REPORTED BY AMERICAN CAPUCHINS, AND SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF IMPARTIAL BIPARTISAN INVESTIGATION BY NICARAGUAN CONGRESS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE.

(E) FURTHERMORE, EMBASSY ALSO HAS WARNED GON THAT CONTINUING REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY THE NATIONAL GUARD, SOME OF WHICH BELIEVE TO BE ACCURATE, THREATENS TO PLACE STRAIN ON OUR RELATIONS UNLESS SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED.

(F) IN LAST QUARTER OF 1976 REPORTS TO EMBASSY FROM CHURCH SOURCES AND OTHERS INDICATED A DECLINE IN ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY GON. BUT IN FEBRUARY 1977, THE AMERICAN CAPUCHIN PRIESTS REPORTED NEW ALLEGATIONS OF SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS NOTED ABOVE WHICH WERE COMMUNICATED TO DEPARTMENT. OTHER CHARGES OF CONTINUING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, SOME FROM LESS CREDIBLE SOURCES, HAVE ALSO REACHED EMBASSY AND HAVE BEEN DULY REPORTED.

(G) AT SAME TIME, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT GON FACES A GUERRILLA MOVEMENT (FSLN) LED BY MARXIST-LENINIST, PRO-CASTRO REVOLUTIONARIES (WHICH INCLUDES SOME NON-COMMUNIST ANTI-SOMOZA ELEMENTS) THAT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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ATTEMPTING TO OVERTHROW SOMOZA REGIME AND IMPLANT MARXIST DICTATORSHIP. THE PRO-CASTRO GUERRILLA LEADERSHIP IS HOSTILE TO HUMAN RIGHTS, REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE UNITED STATES, AND IS ENGAGED IN ARMED VIOLENCE, KILLING NICARAGUAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS, AND INNOCENT CAMPESINOS. IN VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN NICARAGUAN MILITARY AND FSLN GUERRILLAS, GON HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INNOCENT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN CROSS FIRE, SINCE GUERRILLAS OFTEN TAKE REFUGE IN CAMPESINO HUTS.

(H) REPORTS ON ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES RECEIVED BY EMBASSY ARE OF VARYING RELIABILITY, DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE, AND OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE TO VERIFY. INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY IAHRG, OR OTHER MULTILATERAL BODY, RATHER THAN USG WHICH IS NOT IN POSITION TO CARRY OUT COMPLETE INVESTIGATION OF REPORTED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. USG FULLY SUPPORTS IAHRG WHICH SHOULD BE GIVEN THE ASSIGNMENT OF INVESTIGATION ACCUSATIONS OF GROSS ABUSES.

2. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF NICARAGUAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AND OUR
SUGGESTIONS REGARDING APPROPRIATE U.S. POLICY RESPONSES WILL BE
FORWARDED TO DEPARTMENT OVER NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.
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